

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Corrections (BOC) implemented the Juvenile Detention Profile Survey (JDPS) in January 1999 as a way to provide state and local decision makers with timely and comprehensive information about the changing populations – and needs – of local juvenile detention facilities. With assistance and support from its local partners, primarily county probation departments, the Board developed a survey instrument for capturing data that are critical to strategic planning related to facility design, detention programming and resource distribution.

During 2000, juvenile halls, camps, and ranches held over 11,000 juveniles. This number seems to be on the rise. Probation departments need to be armed with readily available data in order to make decisions regarding this population and plan for future needs. As more juvenile facilities are constructed, and the space within them fills up, the JDPS will be able to tell us what characteristics these populations are exhibiting, and what their needs are in order to safely and efficiently run a juvenile detention system.

One of the primary objectives of the JDPS is to track the population level in California's 130 local juvenile halls and camps. In addition to gathering statistics on the average daily population and highest one-day count in these facilities, the JDPS collects data on the number of juvenile offenders housed under contract in other jurisdictions and the use of different non-facility-based custody options. In time, this information will enable the BOC to identify population trends that will provide valuable insight to state and local officials in responding to future juvenile detention needs.

To assist facility managers in making decisions about what programs to provide and where to allocate resources, the JDPS also gathers data on various characteristics of the juveniles detained in local facilities, including gender, age, type of offense, disposition and mental health needs.

During 2000, each county probation department that operated a detention facility submitted monthly and quarterly data to the BOC. The monthly survey requests facility or placement-specific data on gender, offense, disposition status and daily population. This form also gathers county-level data on detainees' mental health issues, the number of days over capacity, and bookings. The quarterly survey gathers county-level data on detained juveniles by certain identifiers (e.g., awaiting placement or transport, suspected illegal/criminal alien, and remand to adult court), age distributions in halls and camps, average length of stay and incidence of assault, escapes and attempted or completed suicides. The BOC aggregates all data and reports findings on a quarterly basis.

As the years go on, this data will take a more meaningful shape. Trends that have already begun will become more evident. The BOC anticipates that the JDPS will continue to serve as a useful tool to local juvenile detention systems.